

PROCLAMATION

IN RECOGNITION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHEREAS, February has been designated as *Black History Month*, in which we pause to reflect on the contributions of the African American community. African Americans have been an important part of the history of Matthews and have made valuable and lasting contributions to the Town of Matthews; and

WHEREAS, Matthews is home to the Crestdale community, one of the oldest African American communities in North Carolina. The Town of Matthews and the Crestdale community have worked to preserve this piece of local history by completing the Matthews Heritage Trail. Signage is placed at specific locations along the trail, detailing some of the history and interesting facts about Crestdale; and

WHEREAS, the first known African American residents in the Tank Town area, beginning in 1880, include William Weddington, Harvey Downs, Epp Grier, and Henry Gaddy. In 1963, the school system changed the name of the school in Tank Town from *Matthews Colored School* to *Crestdale*. The entire community adopted the new name; and

WHEREAS, Sam Boyd, the son of Rev. Henry Calvin Boyd, who started Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, grew up in Tank Town. Sam and his wife Viola built their home on Crestdale Drive in 1944. Sam was unofficially known at the "Mayor of Crestdale" for the many ways he helped the community. He represented the community on the Matthews School Board, helped to get Crestdale incorporated into Matthews, and began the Crestdale Community Association; and

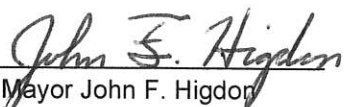
WHEREAS, Harvey Boyd, the youngest child of Viola and Sam, attended the Matthews Colored School. At just 19 years old, Harvey designed the seal for Mecklenburg County that is still used today. Harvey was one of the first black staff members for the Charlotte Observer, working in the graphics department. He went on to attend Howard University and worked for The Washington Post. After a career as a commercial artist, Harvey returned home to Crestdale; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Selma Burke, a well-known artist and sculptor, often visited Matthews while growing up in Mooresville, North Carolina. Selma Burke Lane was named in her honor in 1992. Dr. Burke donated a bronze sculpture that is now on display in Matthews Town Hall; and

WHEREAS, historic Roseland Cemetery is home to the graves of approximately 75-125 souls, believed to be mostly freed slaves and African Americans. The cemetery was used for burial until the late 1950s. It was named a local historic landmark in 2012 by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark Commission. The Matthews Historical Foundation, together with Hoke Thompson, recently led an effort to cleanup and restore the property. The Foundation continues working to identify those buried at the cemetery.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, that the Town of Matthews does hereby recognize February as Black History Month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Town of Matthews to be affixed this 14th day of February, 2022.


Mayor John F. Higdon